

THE FAILURE

Property of

Johnnie Speer .

THE FAILURE

CHARACTERS

Pa Potter Character Comedy
Ma Potter Character
Mamie Soubrette
Red Lead
Bill Juvenile
Mr. Rankin Heavy

PROPS

Sofa
Library table
Floor lamp
Newspaper
Three chairs

Oil leases
Check book
Fountain pen
Automobile effect
Telegram blank

SETTING

|| ||
' SOFA FLOOR LAMP '
' CHAIR '
D. R. D. L.
' TABLE CHAIR '
'
F o o t l i g h t s

Mamie

(enters R, after opening and goes to phonograph and puts on record "Always" or some other sentimental record. She listens to it awhile then bursts out crying)

Pa

(enters R, with newspaper) Why, Mamie, what's the matter. You crying?

Mamie

(wiping eyes hastily) N--no, why?

Pa

(pulling her hands off her face) My little girl, can't fool me. I guess I know when she's crying.

Mamie

I wasn't either.

Pa

Well, you're lookin' mighty unhappy.

Mamie

You're not lookin' so happy yourself.

Pa

Who? Me?

Mamie

Yes, you. You've been moping around the house looking like bad news from home ever since you came back from that oil field. What did you find down there? You don't seem to be very happy about it.

Pa

Well, I didn't find much, that's the truth. Just some men drillin' a well, and I couldn't say they were very enthusiastic. Mamie, if that oil well is no good, we won't have a dime.

Mamie

Well, maybe it will turn out all right.

Pa

Well, it sure looks bad right now.

Mamie

You didn't tell Ma that did you?

Pa

(hurriedly) I should say not! I told her everything looked fine. What's the use of breaking her up for nothing. Mamie, I wouldn't dare to tell her that the prospects were so small. She's been against me ever since she found out I bought that landlease.

Mamie

Well, maybe everything will come out all right. There is oil in Tennessee. I've heard of it.

Pa

Youf ma's been razzing me all the time. Every time she sees me she has some bright crack. She thoroughly expects me to lose everything.

Mamie

(puts arm around him) I don't think you've got so very much to worry about. I wouldn't holler until I was hurt anyway. Cheer up.

Pa

(hugs her) You're a good scout Mamie. I wanted a boy before you was born, but doggone me if you aint better'n any boy I ever saw. (patting her affectionately) You're all right.

Mamie

(touched) I wish--some other people thought that.

Pa

What do you mean?

Mamie

(turning her back to him) Nothing.

Pa

Now, tell me what's the matter, Mamie. What's the matter with my little

girl? Is anybody makin' her unhappy?

Mamie

It's---it's Red.

Pa

(lifering up) What's he done? Has he done anything to you? I'll break every---

Mamie

Oh no, no Pa its not that. Its just---we had a fight and he's never co to see or call me up or anyth ng.

Pa

When did you have a fight?

JMamie

That same night that you told Ma about the oil leases and you went downthere to see the well. You know I went to see the medium that day and she told me that Gladys Rankin was tryin' to steal Red away from me, and that very night Gladys comes in with Red, hanging on his arm'n every hing, and I could just tell by looking at them that the medium was right. And then we had words---Red and me, and he went out and I haven't seen him since, and that's a week ago. A whole week! Think of it!

Pa

(hugs her) Oh I wouldn't worry, he'll come back. He didn't get to be a star fullback by stayin' down every time he was thrown. I've watched Red. He'll be tearin' in here one of these evenin's as if nothin' everhappened.

Mamie

On no he won't.

Pa

Oh yes, he will. Well, I think I'll go in and read the paper. I wouldn't worry if I was you. (exits R)

Bill

(enters L) Sis, where's my hat. Seen my hat anywhere?

Mamie

How should I know where your hat is? Why don't you put it where you can find it?

Bill

Because I never find it where I put it. What are you settin' the stage for? Got a pettin' party on tonight?

Mamie

My, you're vulgar.

Bill

Huh! The kettle callin' the pot black. (cuasally) Seen Red down the street.

Mamie

(trying to appear unconcerned) Oh, did you?

Bill

I told him you wanted to see him.

Mamie

(frantically) You didn't! You didn't.

Bil

Well---don't you want to see him? 'Course you do. You've been moonin' around here for a week like a chicken with the pip.

Mamie

What did he say when you told him?

Bill

Oh, he sadd he m ght drop in tonight.

Mamie

(excited) Did he honest?

Bill

Oh he said he might. Said he didn't know why he should though, you were actin' awful stiff about somep'n.

Mamie

Oh he did, did he?

Bill

I told him that was nothin, you've always got a grouch on about somep'n he might as well get used to it.

Mamie

That was sweet of you, wasn't. You're the most obliging dear little brother I ever saw.

Bill

Don't mention it. I'd sure pity Red if he ever married you. I'd pity any man that had to marry a nut like you.

Mamie

Well, I'd hate to be the woman that would marry you.

Bill

Oh you would, huh? Well, I'll bet I'd make 'em happy.

Mamie

Yes, you would if you committed suicide after the wedding and left her the insurance.

Bill

Well, if I married anything like you, I'd be glad to do it.

Mamie

And if I married anything like you, I'd be glad to have you do it.

Bill

Aw, shut up.

Mamie

You make, me. Just make me.

Bill

You give me a pain in the neck.

Mamie

I didn't know rubber could hurt.

Bill

Say, that's enough out of you.

Mamie

(looking at fancy handkerchief in his pocket) And that's enough out of you. Say, you've got my silk handkerchief in your pocket. You give that to me. That's not yours.

Bill

Aw well, sis, just let me wear it tonight, won't you? Huh?

Mamie

No, nothing doing. Give it here. (she advances toward him)

Bill

Naw now. (moves around the table, she after him)

Mamie

You give me that handkerchief. I'll call ma and make you. Come on. Ma! Ma!

Ma Potter

(enters L) Landsakes what's the matter?

Mamie

He won't give me my handkerchief.

Bill

Aw, gosh ma, let me have it. I'm goin' some place and I don't want to wear that funny little linen handkerchief of mine.

Mamie

He's going to see that knock kneed Sally Fisher, and wants to put on airs. Just smell him, Ma, he's even got perfume on.

Bill

Listen, you dumb dora, Sally aint knockneed.

Mamie

No, she couldn't be any body with bow legs can't be knock need.

Bill

Now listen, Ma, if you don't make her shut up I'm gonna hit her. Sally Fisher's just as good a girl friend as you've got for a boy friend.

Mamie

Don't you say against My Red or I'll slap your face off.

Ma

Children! Children! Stop it! You'll have the neighbors awake.

Bill

Aw, well she started it all! Gosh, I'm gonna move out of this house. I've got the meanest sis in the world. (moves up to door C)

Mamie

And I've got the meanest brother in the world.

Bill

(looking at door) Oh here comes that boy friend of yours.

Mamie

Red! Is Red coming here.

Bill

Yah, he said he was comin' up here tonight to see what was eatin' on you. He ought to been here 'fore this. I just left him down the street.

Mamie

Well, you clear out of here when he comes.

Bill

Gosh, I don't want to hang around. (starts to go) Neckin' aint no treat to me. I roll my own.

Mamie

Oh there he is now, turning in the front yard. Quick! All of you get out. Go on, hurry. I've got things to settle with that man.

Ma

All right, I'll go in and tease your pa about that oil land he bought. (exits R.)

Bill

Well, guess I'll go see my Sheba. (face at Mamie) Good bye, you poor Mutt! (exits C)

Mamie

Get out of here! (he arranges all the sofa pillows and everything takes out her vanity and fixes her face. Straightens out her dress) Now, I'm prepared! (door bell rings) Just watch me give him the cold heart and stony stare! (exits C)

***** N U M B E R *****
ONE

Mamie

(enters C before Red carrying his hat, she acts very stiffly and he does too) I'll place your hat on the table.

Red

Very well, Miss Potter.

Mamie

(emphazing the Mister) Will you be seated, Mr. Miller. (sits on sofa)

Red

I will, Miss Potter. (sits on sofa opposite end from her)

Mamie

I haven't seen you for some time, Mr. Miller.

Red

A matter of four days I believe, Miss Potter. Been kind o' warm today hasn't it.

Mamie

Yes, Mr. Miller. I've been roasting. But the evenings are colder, don't you think?

Red

Oh yes the evenings are much cooler.

Mamie
Makes it much better to sleep when the evenings are cool, Mr. Miller.

Red
Yes, that's so, Miss Potter.

Mamie
Yes it is, Mr. Miller.

Red
Yes, Miss. Potter.

Mamie
Yes, Mr. Miller.

Red
Miss Ptter,

Mamie
Mr. Miller.

Red
What the hells the matter with you, Mamie?

Mamie
Oh, Red!

Red
What was the matter with you the other night?

Mamie
Who, me?

Red
Yes, you. You acted sorta strange, what's the idea? I didn't do anything to you.

Mamie
Huh! You don't seem to have worried much about it. You seem to be getting plenty of consolation.

Red
Who, me?

Mamie
Sure hasn't Gladys been consoling you?

Red
Gladys? Why Gladys is just a friend.

Mamie
Erénd ha ha! Freind! Friend, that's good,

Red
Sure, that's all.

Mamie
Sure, thats what you say.

Red
Honest, dear. (moves closer to her)

Mamie
Any old day!

Red
Say, listen, I wouldn't give your little finger for all the Gladys Rankins---why, say, she's nothing in my young life.

Mamie
(softening) Sure? Honest? Cross your heart and hope to die?

Red
Honest hope to die. You've got her licked to death with looks style and everything. (Red starts to put his arms around her)

Mamie
Be careful somebody may see us.
(she cuddles in his arms) (big sigh) Oh Red!

Red
Oh, Mamie! (pause) Gee, there's lots of light in here.

Mamie
You know where the switch is, don't you, Red?

Red
(reaches over and pushes button all but the floor lamp go out and

they are in each others arms in the soft light)

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Red

Everythings all right now, aint it, Baby?

Mamie

(cooing) Uh huh. You know when I saw you come in with Gladys and she lookin' up at you with those sheep eyes and you being so friendly and intimate with her, it made me feel so bad.

Red

Why, I was just being nice to her that was all. A fellow's got to be nice to a girl, don't he?

Mamie

Yes, but he don't have to be so darn nice. And the worst of it was, it came just after the fortune teller told me that Gladys was trying to come in between us. And then that very night you come in so--- so friendly as you call it. (begins to sniffle and buries her head in Red's shoulder)

Red

(patting her awkwardly) There, there, don't cry, please don't cry. You know I wouldn't do anything to hurt you. You know I think more of you than I do anybody and I always will. (she sobs on)

Mamie

Even at the house that morning you wer having secrets from me--- you and Gladys.

Red

Can't you guess what the secret was?

Mamie

No.

Red

You remember I was comparing your hand with Gladys and trying your ring on her finger?

Mamie

Yes.

Red

Well, shut your eyes and gimme your hand and I'll tell you the secret. (Mamie does so and Red slips solitaire on her finger)

Mamie

(opening her eyes and looking at it with a gasp of delight) Oh! It's beautiful. Platinum too.

Red

Do you like it?

Mamie

Oh, I love it. Our engagement ring. And to think that I could ever have doubted you. (Red draws her close) Wasn't I silly, dear.

Red

I should say you was.

Mamie

Isn't love wonderful?

Red

Uh huh.

Mamie

You do love me, don't you?

Red

Uh huh/

Mamie

Why don't you ask me if I love you?

Red

All right, do you?

Mamie

Do I? I'll say I do.

Red

(hugging her close) Gee, that's swell.

Mamie

And we're never going to quarrel any more, are we? When we have our

own little home, we'll never never quarrel, will we?

Red
I should say not. ^{Red} That would be silly, wouldn't it?

Mamie
Awfull silly. Just because other married people quarrel, we don't have to. We'll be different, won't we, honey.

Red
I'll say we'll be different. Gee, married life must be great.

Pa and Ma
(off stage engage in an another argument about the oil land)

Ma
Huh! You did? You're a bigger boob than I thought you were. Don't tell me that a smart man like Rankin would let himself get roped in the way you do. Rankin I'll bet never bought those leases. Rankin is a smart man. I wish I'd married a man like him.

Pa
Now, ma, you don't know but what there might be oil on that land. Thin what would happen if there was, we'd be rich. We'd have special cars to ride in a town house, and a country house, and---

Ma
But all we'll live in is the poor house. Oil! Instead of buying an oil well, why didn't you buy the Masonic Home, or the Woolworth Building. I'll sell you the police station for four hundred dollars is that a bargain. Give me another shot, Watson, quick, the needle.

Pa
Oh shut up! I'm trying to read.

Ma
Don't you tell me to shut up, John D. Rockefeller. You great big Oil man from the West. (laughs) Pa, I'm gonna have your head examined.

Pa
Aw, dry up and go to bed.

Ma
Now, I think I'll sit up and wait for them to bring in the oil well.

Pa
Oh keep on, keep it up.

Red
Gee, your folks get along nice, don't they?

Mamie
Ma sore because he took all the money we had and bought an oil well with it. They've been getting along lately like a couple of bulldogs

Red
Lots of married people are like that. They don't know how to get along becaus they never give into to each other. If I'm ever in the wrong, I'll own up to it, that's the kind of a guy I am.

Mamie
Oh, But, Red, you're so different. If all men were like you---

Red
Oh I'm not so different.

Mamie
Oh yes, you are. If you wasn't different I wouldn't love you the way I do. You now I love you, don't you?

Red
Uh huh. (they clinch again) Gosh, its a nice night, aint it?

Mamie
Swell,

Red
So quiet!

Mamie
(after a short pause) Mother was saying only the other day, "Well I guess you'll be gettin' married one of these days soon now and leavin'

us," and Pa siad---but I won't tell you what he said---something about you----I shut him right up I can tell you.

Red

What did he say about me?

Mamie

(coquettishly) I won't tell you.

Red

(aroused) Come on, please tell me.

Mamie

Now I won't.

Red

Aw, go on. It was about me, wasn't it?

Mamie

Well, he said---he said---well he said "Red isn't making enough money to get married on. He'll have to have a better job than a life guard before he can have any daughter of mine." ---but I shut him right up. I stood right up for you. I told him you had a good job in sight and everything.

Red

I have got a good job in sight and we'll get married too, and I'll tell him so---what do you think o' that?

Mamie

(cooing) Oh, Red, you're so masterful. (pause, and then softly) They say long engagements are awful bad luck. Of course that's only superstition. (pause) Still there's a lot of truth in those old sayings (pause) Red, Honey,-----

Red

Yes, sweetheart.

Mamie

When are you gonna talk to Pa?

Red

Why should I talk to Pa? I'm not going to marry him. He'll say no of course.

Mamie

Oh, I don't think he will.

Red

Oh yes, he will but that won't make any difference to me. I'll take your right out from under his nose. That's the kind of a guy I am.

Mamie

Sweetheart!

Red

Darling!

Mamie

Why, don't you talk to pa tonight. He's in the other room now.

Red

(feelingly) Oh no, its such a---well, we're comfortable right here aren't we?

Mamie

No, I want to know. I'll call Pa out here. Pa! Oh Pa!

Red

No, no, don't do that, Mamie.

Mamie

Why, sure, go ahead.

Pa

(off stage) What do you want, Mamie?

Mamie

(pushing Red toward door R) Red wants to see you. (to Red) Go on, he harmless. His false teeth are out he won't bite.

Red

No, but he might snap at me.

Mamie

You aren't afraid are you?

Red
No, I'm just afraid I might get afraid!

***** N U M B E R *****
TWO

(Mamie? Pa and Red are on)
Pa
Red? What? Me. does he? What does he want to see me about?
Mamie
Oh, he'll tell He can tell you better himself.
Red
(awkwardly) Go. ing, Mr. Potter.
Pa
Did you call me here just to tell me that?
Red
No, no that isn't exactly it. You see, we wanted to tell you----
Pa
YehM
Red
We thought we'd better tell you----
Pa
Yeh?
Red
Er did you know something?
Pa
Something. Know something? Say what are you talking about.
Red
Er----well
Mamie
Oh ---a-----er--
Red
Ah---er---er
Pa
Welll---er---er--
Mamie
Oh Pa, me and Red are engaged
Pa
Engaged?
Mamie
Xeh, and we thought
Pa
Maybe perhaps---yes
Mamie
Yes, we thought maybe perhaps.
Pa
Yes, you thought maybe perhaps---what the---Is that all you two
say. Why don't you talk?
Red
(with superhuman effort) Well its like this. Mamie and me---we're
gonna get married. That is, if you---if you---
Pa
Married---er---you mean married?
Red
(gulping) Yes, married. That is, if you don't care.
Pa
But your prospects? Your job? You're---a what is it? A life guard
isn't it?
Red
(confused) No, you see the beach is closed now.
Pa
Then you're an ex-life guard. Surely there isn't much future in that.
I can see how you might get through the summer all right, but what

wo ld you and Mamie do during the winter; sleep like a couple of bears?

Red

But I have a good job practiacally cinched. Its in an advertsing agency and my father knows one of the directors very well. He's a personal friend. And he knows me too, so of course I'd get in on the ground floor.

Pa

(with wisdom of experience) Yes, but I've discovered that fellows who g in on the ground floor usually wind up in the basement.

Red

But this is different.

Pa

But you certainly don't expect to marry my daughter on the prospect of a job. Have you got som thing saved up?

Red

No, I haven't anything saved, but I xan work and both of us can save together. Others have done, it, why can't we.

Mamie

Of course we can.

Pa

I don't believe in young falks getting married on a shoe string They hhave so much trouble the first year making both ends meet they're too worried to be nice to each other. And the first thing youknow they're scrapping, and blooie goes another marriage on the rocks.

Mamie

But, Pa, you didn't have anything when you and Ma got married

Pa

That's different. When we were married things were different. It didn't cost so much to live in those days. Why you could rent a mighty nice place for ten dollars a month, and eggs were onlyfifteen cents apiece.

Mamie

(with feminine logic) I don't like eggs any way. Do you, Red?

Red

No I hate 'em.

Mamie

And I never could cook 'em right.

Red Pa

But young man do you realize the importance of this step. You ask to that this girl whom we have chrished and guarded so tenderly You ask to take her away from her out but into the world to struggle and battla---

Red

We're not gonna battle.

Pa

I mean struggle againts the adverstitys of life, my boy. I am sorry, young man, but before you can get my consent to marry my daughter you must show you are capable of providing for her in the manner to whi she has been accustomed.

Mamie

Two can live as cheap as one.

Pa

Ha! One what? No, my minds made up. You can't have my consent.

Red

Why not?

Pa

Because you can't support a wife. College boy! Ex-life guard! What kind of a job is that?

Red

Well I told you I would have a good job soon. Beside you can't talk to me as if I was a kid. I'm a man.

Pa

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Man! You're just a kid that's too tall for short pants. You marry my daughter! That's a joke.

Red

Oh! a joke is it. Well, you better start laughing.

Pa

Waddy mean?

Red

I mean we're goin' to get married.

Pa

You're what?

Red

Just what I said we're goin' to get married. "Mammie loves me and I love her and I can take care of her and I'm goin' to.

Pa

You---you--

Red

Yes, me--me000

Mamie

Pa, listen--

Pa

(turning on her) What! You keep out of this young lady.

Red

I asked for your consent but if you won't give it to me, I'll get along without it.

Pa

What do you mean, talking to me like that? Get outa here.

Red

All right, I'll get out.

Pa

You stay away from Mamie too.

Red

Not so you can notice it.

Mamie

Pa!

Pa

And I've had enough nonsense from you too, young lady. You give that young scamp his hat and show him to the door.

Mamie

Why pa, how can you talk to Red like that.

Pa

Hold your tongue. Will you show him the door or will I have to do it?

Red

Nobody has to show me any door. Good night. See you tomorrow, Mamie.

Pa

No, you won't you show him the door. This is one time I'm goin' to have my way if I die for it. You're not goin' to see her again, and as for marryin' her, I'll chase you to China first.

Red

Well, you may have to start sooner than you expect.

Pa

Get out! (Red starts for the door)

Mamie

(tearfully) Wait a minute, Red. (door bell rings) Who's that?
(joins Red and they talk together excitedly)

Ma

(off stage) Yes, this is the Potter residence. I'll sign for it.

(enters with telegram) Telegram for you Pa, Shall I open it? (opens it while she is asking him) Maybe from the oil well. Maybe they struck oil.

Pa

(eagerly) Lets see it. What is it?

Ma

Ma

(reading telegram then suddenly rushes to him waving it frantically)
My God! Look, Pa! Look! (reads) "Must put up thousand dollars
additional at once to save money invested in leases. Rush. Important.
Letter following. Tennessee Oil & Investment Company"

- Pa

(weakly) Lemme see it, lemme see it.

Ma

(ready to cry) There, what did I tell you? What are you going to do?

Pa

(helplessly) I don't know.

Ma

I told you so. Our four thousand dollars is gone and the mortgage
is coming due on our home. We'll be out on the streets. (shaking him
excitedly) We'll be out on the streets---do you hear me?

Pa Pa

(dazed) Yes.

Ma

(storming) Oh, why did you do it, Pa? Why did you do it? Where
are those leases? Lemme see those leases. (rushes out, pursued by
Pa)

Pa

(calling and following her out) Wait a minute, Ma.

Red

(to Mamie excited), C'mon, I tell you.

Mamie

(wringing her hands) I can't, I'm afraid.

Red

C'mon Pa's car's outside. We'll beat it to Crown Point and be married
tonight.

Mamie

But he may catch us.

Red

He won't before we're married, and after that what good will it do
him? Shhh---they're coming back. Get your hat and coat---pack your
bag. I'll meet you out in the car. Hurry! I'll show him whether I'll
marry you or not.

Mamie

Oh, I'm afraid.

Red

(shaking her by the shoulders) Lookit, here. Do you love me or don't
you?

Mamie

Ye---es. but---

Red

Will you beat it with me now and get married, or won't you? I won't
ask you again.

(hys

Mamie

(hysterically) Ye--es, I will.

Red

All right, outside in Pa's car. Hurry! here they come. (they both
exit C just as Pa and Ma come back)

Pa

(dazed) I don't know. I don't know. I thought---

Ma

(bitterly) I knew this would happen. You, with all your planning and
scheming! Oh, you never did anything yet that came out right. Other
men can do things, other men can make money and succeed, but you--
but you---you're a failure.

Pa

(holding up his hand) Don't, Ma.

Ma

(wailing) Why did you do it, anyway?

Pa

(brokenly) Why? Why, I did it for you. For you and the children. I wanted you to have the things other women have. I wanted to make ever thing easier for you. I wanted you to have nice clothes and servants and cars. I wanted to do som thing for my children like other men do. I---I wanted---oh, what's the use? It was only a dream---you're right---I'm a failure, I'm no good, but honestly, Ma, it was you I had in mind---you and the children. I don't want anything for myself I wanted to do something for you and I thought this was the chance And now---well, I'm a failure. You said it.

Ma

(whimpering) I never said anything of the kind.

Pa

Yes you did. You're always throwing up other men to me. Always telling me how successful they are, how much smarter they are. There's Rankin. You're always throwing him up to me. Rankin this and Rankin that.

Ma

(with feeling) Rankin, that--that why, Pa, I'm glad you're not like Rankin. I'd rather have you without a cent than Rankin with all his trickiness and cunning and lying. Even if he was covered with diamonds.

Pa

You're just sayin' that because you're tryin' to cheer me up, not because you mean it.

Ma

I do mean it, dear, every word of it.

Pa

No, down in your heart you know I'm a failure, and I am. All my life I've just been missing out. The only stroke of luck I ever had was getting you. (kisses her)

Ma

Oh, Pa!

Pa

There's the office. The years I've bee there. Other men have come in below me, worked up to me, gone on over me. I tried to fool myself by saying it was because they had a pull or they were lucky. But that aint it. They've got something I haven't got. (helplessly) What is it? They don't work any harder. They don't work as hard. They aint any more faithful and more conscientious, but they get there and I don't, and now I know I never will. I'm no good that's all. I've been a fourflusher and a failure and I finish up by taking all our savings---the money we've struggled for all these years and I throw it in a hole in the ground.

Ma

There, there. Don't you worry. Everything will come out all right.

Pa

No, it won't. Dear, when I went down in Tennessee to see the oil land I bought, I came back here and told you everything looked great. Well, I lied. The men said that if there was oil there, they'd sure made a big mistake. They laughed at me for buying it. Sometimes I think Rankin knew there was no il there when he got me to take half of those leases. Rankin never did like me.

Ma

Oh, that's all right, Pa. We'll find some way out of it. And no matter what happens, I'll stick right by you. (starts suddenly) Look! There's a moth. (jumps up and begins chasing it around the room, slapping her hands together. To Pa) Come on, help me catch it.

Pa
(rises wearily, makes one or two ineffectual efforts then succeeds in trapping moth between his hands, holds it out to Ma) Another failure. Just another Pa Potter.

(Roar of an automobile outside)

Ma
What's that? (rushes to the window)

Pa
Sounds like my car. Somebody stealing it?

Ma
It's Mamie and Red.

Pa
In my car. They're running away---they're elopin'!

Ma
Eloping. What? Mamie! Mamie!

Pa
(calls) Hey, there! Come back here!

Ma
(shouting hysterically) Mamie! Mamie!

Pa
(to Ma) I'll chase 'em. I'll catch 'em. I'll chase 'em to China.
(catches up his hat and rushes out as Ma stands at open window crying "Mamie" "Mamie")

***** N U M B E R *****
THREE

(Mamie and Red sneak in at the center. They are married, You can tell it by their happy expression)

Red
Nobody's at home!

Mamie
I wonder if Dad gave us a chase.

Red
Sure he did, but he couldn't catch nothing. Well, we're married now.

Mamie
Let's hunt up mother. She can always put dad in a good humorehen she wants to. She'll get him not to be sore at us.

Red
All right (they start)

Bill
(enters) Sis!

Mamie
Oh, Bud, where's Ma?

Bill
She's up in her room. Did you get married all right?

Mamie
Yes.

Bill
(shaking Red's hand) Congratulations, Red, you have my symptahy.

Mamie
Oh stop being silly. Was Pa very mad?

Bill
Was he? Say, he swore up and down he was going to punch Red in the nose the minute caught him.

Red
I'd like to see him try it.

Bill
Well, pa, wouldn't be the least bit afraid

Well, come on, Red, let's go find Mother. (they exit R)

Bill

(looking after them) Gee, I wonder how it feels to get married?

Rankin

(knocks on C door)

Bill

(going to the door) Hello! Come in, Mr. Rankin.

Rankin

Is your father in, Bill?

Bill

No, he isn't. He's up town. Ought to be back soon though. Will you wait for him?

Rankin

Well, I think I will.

Bill

All right, sit down, and make yourself at home.

Pa

(enters with newspaper in his hand) Well---hello, there, Rankin.

Rankin

Howdy, Potter. How are you?

Pa

Pretty good. What can I do for you?

Bill

Pa, can I borrow a half buck, I want to go to town. I don't get paid till Saturday.

Pa

(giving it to him) Yes, here you are, Bill.

Bill

Thanks Dad. (exits)

Rankin

Say, Potter, you know those oil leases?

Pa

Yes?

Rankin

I know a fellow who wants to know if you'll part with some of your leases. I think he wants to buy them.

Pa

Er---wants to buy some leases?

Rankin

I think you could sell him some of yours if you wanted to.

Pa

How did he know I had leases?

Rankin

I told him.

Pa

Why didn't you sell him some of yours?

Rankin

(stalling) I don't know---don't you want to sell? I just thought maybe you didn't want the worry over the leases. That you'd rather have your money safe again.

Pa

Well---I might. What's his proposition?

Rankin

Oh he'll give you what you paid for them

Pa

And will he pay the extra assessment? You know I got assessed an extra thousand dollars.

Rankin

Yes, I guess he'd even do that, too. (eagerly) Well, is it a go?

Pa

Wait a minute. I want something for all the grief that stuff's given me. I should think about---lotssee---about a thousand dollars.

Rankin

Why man, that's ridiculous---- a thousand dollars profit for handful of paper that's already cost you a thousand dollars beside what you paid for it originally---why, you're crazy!

Pa

Well, all right, I'm crazy, but I want to be paid for it. A thousand dollars or nothin'.

Rankin

You're nutty, what's got into you, anyway?

Pa

A thousand dollars profit or nothin'. Don't bother me about it.

I'm not in the mood to be trifled with.

Rankin

All right then; but you're a hard bargainer, Potter.

Pa

It pays to be hard in this world. The harder you are the less likely people are to take a wallap at you.

Rankin

Here's your check for five thousand. I'll take care of the extra assessment myself. Here's four thousand you paid for the leases and an extra thousand clear profit. Have you got the leases here.

Pa

(takes them from pocket) Here they are.

Rankin

You can just make them over to me and I'll make them over to my friend.

Pa

(signing papers) All right here you are.

Rankin

Well, here's your money. Lets see what you have there.

Pa

Here's the four thousand dollars worth of leases I bought, and here's (holding up smaller package) ----these are the ones that fellow through--i threw into me for luck. Want them too?

Rankin

(eagerly) You bet!

Pa

No, I guess I'll keep them for luck. There might be some oil there--- wouldn't that be funny? Ha! Ha!

Rankin

C'mon let me have them. There isn't any oil there.

Pa

Well, maybe not, but I'll just keep them for luck. There might be some oil there. Wouldn't that be funny? (laughs) Ha ha!

Rankin

(with double meaning) Yes there might be some oil there, ha ha!

Pa

Well, much oblige, Rankin. I'm glad to wash my hands of those leases.

Rankin

That so? Well, I'll see you later. Good bye! (exits)

Pa

(laughing) Ha ha! Rankin isn't so smart after all. I've made a thousand dollars profit off the thing any way. Maybe Ma will be satisfied now. I'm out of the oil business. Guess, maybe I aint such a bad business man after all?

Ma

(enters R) Pa, I've got some news for you.

Pa

Huh? What is it?

Ma

Mamie and Red are here?

Pa
Where is he? Let me at that young cuss.

Ma
No, now, Pa, you calm down. They're married and it isn't any use to oppose them. They'll have to enough to worry about now. Remember the old proverb, Pa, "Love with find a way"

Pa
Proverbs----the wisdom of the ages! All bunk! One of t em says "look before you leap and another says "he who hasitates is lost" Another says everything comes to him who waits", and the next one says "Let us then be up and doing" Who you gonna believe? Its all bunk in this world. All lies. Well, Mother, I'll forgive 'em. I should worry. What do I care? (laughs a little)

Ma
Why, Pa, what's the matter with you? You never talked like that before. You seem unusually happy for some reason or other.

Pa
Maybe I am, Ma, maybe I am. Tell Mammie and that long drink of water to come in, and recieve my paternal blessings.

Ma
(going R) Mamie. Red. Come on in.
(Mamie and Red enter R looking at Pa)

Pa
Well?

Ma
Now don't be mean, Pa?
Mammie

Please don't daddy.
Pa
Aw, congratulations and go to the devil.

Red
(shakes his hand) Thanks, Mr. Potter.

Pa
Now, Red, you've got my daughter. You're gonna be good to her, aint you?

Red
Yes, Pa. May I call you Pa?

Pa
You might just as well start now. And Red, remember, I didn't give you my daughter---you took here-----but that's all right now. It's up to you to make her happy.

~~Red.-----w-w-Red-
illwotorgieifwrtabazubutuzuchekkrHensebruThararissuauraruraweddingrresent
fiancgnay~~

Red
I'll try.

Pa
(writes out a check) Here's a little check sort of a wedding present for you.

Red
(looks at it) Whew! Four hundred dollars.

Pa
Four hundred? Pa, we aint got that much in the bank.

Pa
Oh we have now, Ma.

Ma
Where'd you get it?

Pa
You'd be surprised.

Red
Gee, thanks, Mr. Potter. We'll take our Honeymoon on this!

Mamie
Daddy you're wonderful!

Pa
(smiling) Yeh? (takes leases) Here's another wedding present. A few of my oil leases. Bless you, my children.

Ma
Why Pa, if you mean that for a joke, I think that's pretty mean.

Pa
(with great good nature) Oh maybe it ain't a joke. Maybe there's oil there. Who knows? (half to himself) That's it? Who does know?

Red
(to Mamie) Come on, let's go and have a honeymoon on Pa's four hundred. (pocketing oil leases) Every little bit helps. If we strike oil, I'll send you a car. Come on, Mamie. Good bye, folks, we gotta catch a train goin' somewhere. (they all great good byes to each other and Red and Mamie exit)

Pa
And that's that. Watta life. Watta life.

Ma
I can't realize it. My little girl married and gone away from me on her honeymoon-----Oh I hope she'll be happy.

Pa
(slipping out toward R)

Ma
Pa, where you goin'?

Pa
I'm goin' out in the kitchen to get something to eat. (exits R)

Ma
(calling after him) Say, don't forget to lock the back door.

Pa
All right.

Ma
And Pa!

Pa
What is it?

Ma
Be sure and empty the pan under the ice box.

Bill
(dashing in, waving paper) Look! Look!

Ma
(alarmed) What is it? What's the matter?

Bill
Look at this. Big oil well near El Dorado, Tennessee. That's where we want.

Ma
El Dorado Tennessee Let me see it. (reads it and then call to Pa)
Pa! Oh Pa!

Pam
(entering) What do you want now?

Ma
(excited) Look, we're rich. Look!

Pa
(bewildered) Rich? Rich? What are you talkin' about?

Ma
Listen! Listen! Listen to this. (reads) "El Dorado, Tennessee, Special Oil has been struck today three miles southwest of El Dorado where the Tennessee Oil & Investment Company has been drilling a well for the past few weeks. Oil men say that it is one of the largest gushers that has ever been tapped in this country. It is understood that the leases on this property are held by a syndicate of Chicago business men."

Pa

(utterly dumbfounded) Why---why---leemme see it. (bends over paper and reads it, following lines with trembling fingers)

Ma

(almost hysterical with joy) Oh Pa, Pa we're rich. Think of it. (she goes on heedless of the expression of despair which is growing more pitiful on Pa's face) Rich! Oh I've dreamed of it, but I never thought it would come true. No more scraping and struggling to keep up appearances. No more pinching and saving to meet gas bills, electric light bills, installments on furniture. Now we can have new furniture I've always wanted a big over stuffed suite for the living room. Won't Mrs. Rankin be jealous? (Bill does indian dance) And rugs, Real Oriental rugs. And real pictures, painted by hand/ And we can afford to have lace shades and I can get that kitchen cabinet I always wanted and an electric ironer. (turning to Pa, almost weeping with joy) And I owe it all to you. And to think that I said you never would succeed. Oh Pa, how can you ever forgive me.

Pa

(miserably) Why ---er---

Ma

(noticing his expression for the first time) Why Pa, what's the matter with you has the shock been too much for you?

Pa

(miserably) No, no. (buries his face in his hands and moans) Oh, my God!

Ma

(alarmed) What's the matter? What's the matter?

Pa

I----I can't tell you.

Ma

What is it? What's the matter?

Pa

We're not rich, Ma.

Ma

(bewildered) Why, why? why? Look, look here in the paper.

Pa

(weakly) Yes, yes, I know, I know, but---Ma, listen---don't cry---Ma, but listen. I----I sold the leases.

Ma

(sinking into chair helplessly) What---you---sold---

Pa

Yes---the leases---to Rankin.

Ma

(wailing) ooooooh!

Pa

(miserably) He came here this evening and offered me all I paid for them and a thousand dollars more. I didn't tell you before, but that's what I was so happy about all evening. I'd been down there, Ma to the oil field and they told me there wasn't any oil and never would be. And it looked like Providence---him coming along and offering me not only what I paid but a thousand dollars more---why, that's nearly half as much as we've saved in fifteen years, Ma.

Ma

(sobbing) Oh Pa, why did you do it? Why do we always have to lose out, always, always?

Pa

(miserably) No matter what I do it's wrong. No matter how hard, I try, I fail. We could have had everything and I throw it away for a miserable thousand dollars. Everything---success, wealth, comfort, happiness. I've let it all slip through my fingers. And who gets it? A scoundrel, a cheat like Rankin. I work hard and try to do what's right for my family and this is what happens. (enraged) What's the

use of tryin' to be fair and square. (bitterly) 20
Be good and you will be happy----what a lie, what a terrible damn lie.

Ma
(brokenly) Pa, Oh Pa! Why did you do it?

Red
(with Mamie enter waving newspaper) Look! Look!

Pa
(dully) Yes, yes I know all about it. Oil, oil, oil.

Red
But man alive---what's the matter with you? Aren't you glad?

Pa
(indespair) Glad? I wish I was dead.

Mamie
But Pa, listen. (slaps his back)

Red
Yes listen. (reads) "Oil men say its one of the largest gushers that ever been tapped in this country. It is understood that the leases on this property are held by a syndicate of Chicago business men.

Pa
(miserably) I know, I know.

Red
(waving him aside) But listen (reads) "This Gusher is located on waht is known as the Frank Winter Farm " (holds up leases) Here, here look! You gave me these. Here they are---leases on 320 acres belonging to Frank Winter. The oil well is on it. It's mine.

Pa
(gradually coming to life) What! Then I didn't seal the oil well to Rankin?

Red
(excitedly) Rankin hell---here it is. Look at it. (grabs Mamie and dacies about the room)

(EVERY BODY IS HAPPY SO MUCH MORE HAPPY THAN PA AND MA)

Pa
(still utterly faffled) And I---I ---I gave my oil well to you?

Red
You sure did.

Pa
Well, I'll be damned.

Bill
(amazed) Waddye think o' that?

Ma
Why, Pa, don't you understand they're rich. The Rankins didn't get the oil well, after all. Mammie and Red got it (hysterically) Oh I can't stand this. (starts to blubber)

Pa
(looking at her amazed) What the devil are you cryin' about now?

Mamie
(comforting her) There, there, you're all excited.

Red
Well, she's not the only one that's excited.

Pa
(dully) Well, you ought to be excited, you're rich.

Red
(gaily) You said I'd never amount to anything, didn't you? Well, look me over. You have a millionaire son-in-law. You see you were wrong.

Pam
(crushed) Yes, you're rich.

Red
No, you're wrong again.

Pa
(baffled) What do you mean?

Red

I mean we're all rich. You don't think I'd take this and not share it with you and Ma, do you?

Ma

(throwing her arms around Red) You sweet boy!

Manie

(throwing her arms around Pa) Oh, Pa, you wonderful old thing!

Ma

(hugging Pa as Manie and Red clinch) Pa, I'm so proud of you.

Bill

Gee whiz! You're all getting mushy. I'm going to bed. (stalks out)

Red

Com on, Manie, lets be off on our honeymoon. (they exit)

Ma

~~Off--off.~~ Oh Pa, how did you ever think to hang on to those leases. Why didn't you sell them to Rankin too?

Pa

Well, I aint such a terrible dumbell after all!

Ma

You old bear! (she hugs him again, and her fingers wander about in his hair) Pa, you've got a little dandruff. You'd better put some oil on it.

Pa

Nothing doing. I'm through with the oil business!

FINALE
